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**DeNUCCI SAYS AUDIT LEADS TO IMPROVED
STATE OVERSIGHT OF LNG STORAGE FACILITIES**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci reported today that the Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE) has improved its oversight of safety procedures at liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage facilities in Massachusetts as a result of an audit that found DTE was not fulfilling its responsibilities.

In the second in a series of homeland security-related reports, DeNucci found that DTE was not enforcing its requirement that operators of LNG plants develop and submit fire study and prevention plans, evacuation plans, and annual operator training reports. The audit also found widely varying amounts of cooperation between LNG operators and local fire and police officials, despite state regulations that require LNG facilities to work with local officials in preparing and updating evacuation and training plans annually.

DeNucci's report also disclosed that 18 of 20 LNG plants which come under the department's jurisdiction had not been inspected on a timely basis. Although LNG plants are supposed to be inspected by DTE once every two years, four of the plants went for more than three years without inspections.

As a result of DeNucci's audit, DTE has taken corrective action and stated that it would amend its procedures to make certain that each LNG facility undergo a standard inspection at least once every two calendar years, and ensure that operators have adequate safety and training plans.

"This is a critically important public safety issue," said DeNucci. "I urge the Department of Telecommunications and Energy to continue to strengthen its oversight of LNG facilities for the protection of our residents."

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